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Xmas No 1868

NEW  
SERIES

DECEMBER

VOL.  
I

"THE STORY OF OUR LIVES FROM  
YEAR TO YEAR"

# All the Year Round

a  
Weekly Journal

CONDUCTED BY

CHARLES DICKENS

WITH WHICH IS INCORPORATED

"HOUSEHOLD WORDS"

PART 1.

PRICE  
NINEPENCE.

1868.

LONDON  
26 WELLINGTON ST  
STRAND.  
W.C.

Nos.  
1 to 4.

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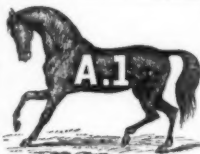
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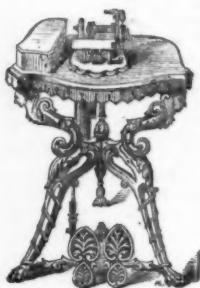
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15 Table Forks .....	1 10 ..	3 1 ..	2 2 ..	2 5 ..
12 Table Spoons .....	1 10 ..	3 1 ..	2 2 ..	2 5 ..
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12 Dessert Spoons .....	1 3 ..	1 7 ..	1 10 ..	1 11 ..
12 Tea Spoons .....	.. 14 ..	.. 10 ..	.. 1 1 ..	.. 1 2 ..
6 Egg Spoons, tilt bowls ..	.. 9 ..	.. 12 ..	.. 12 ..	.. 13 6
2 Sauce Ladles .....	.. 6 ..	.. 8 ..	.. 5 ..	.. 8 ..
1 Gravy Spoon .....	.. 6 ..	.. 8 6 ..	.. 9 ..	.. 9 6
2 Salt Spoons, tilt bowls ..	.. 3 ..	.. 4 ..	.. 4 ..	.. 4 6
1 Mustard Spoon, tilt bowl ..	.. 1 6 ..	.. 3 ..	.. 3 ..	.. 3 3
1 Pair of Sugar Tongs .....	.. 10 6 ..	1 3 ..	1 3 ..	1 3 ..
1 Pair of Fish Carvers ..	.. 3 ..	.. 4 ..	.. 4 ..	.. 4 3
1 Butter Knife .....	.. 10 ..	.. 12 ..	.. 14 ..	.. 15 ..
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NO. 1. NEW SERIES.

SATURDAY, DECEMBER 5, 1868.

PRICE TWOPENCE.

## TO THE PUBLIC.

*A very unjustifiable paragraph has appeared in some newspapers, to the effect that I have relinquished the Editorship of this Publication. It is not only unjustifiable because it is wholly untrue, but because it must be either wilfully or negligently untrue, if any respect be due to the explicit terms of my repeatedly-published announcement of the present New Series under my own hand.*

CHARLES DICKENS.

## WRECKED IN PORT.

A SERIAL STORY BY THE AUTHOR OF "BLACK SHEEP."

### CHAPTER I. MORIBUND.

"I SAY! Old Ashurst's going to die! I heard old Osborne say so. I say, Hawkes, if Ashurst does die, we shall break up at once, shan't we?"

"I should think so! But that don't matter much to me; I'm going to leave this term."

"Don't I wish I was, that's all! Hawkes, do you think the governors will give old Ashurst's place to Joyce?"

"Joyce?—that snob! Not they, indeed! They'll get a swell from Oxford, or somewhere, to be head master; and I should think he'll give Master Joyce the sack."

Little Sam Baker, left to himself, turned out the pocket of his trousers, which he had not yet explored, found a half-melted acidulated drop sticking in one corner, removed it, placed it in his mouth, and enjoyed it with great relish. This refection finished, he leaned his little arms over the park-paling of the cricket-field, where the above-described colloquy had taken place, and surveyed the landscape. Immediately beneath him was a large meadow, from which the hay had been just removed, and which, looking

brown and bare and closely shorn as the chin of some retired Indian civilian, remained yet fragrant from its recent treasure. The meadow sloped down to a broad, sluggishly-flowing stream, unnavigated and unnavigable, where the tall green flags, standing breast-high, bent and nodded gracefully, under the influence of the gentle summer breeze, to the broad-leaved water-lilies couchant below them. A notion of scuttling across the meadow and having "a bathe" in a sequestered part of the stream, which he well knew, faded out of little Sam Baker's mind before it was half formed. Though a determined larker and leader in mischief among his coevals, he was too chivalrous to take advantage of the opportunity which their chief's illness gave him over his natural enemies, the masters. Their chief's illness. And little Sam Baker's eyes were lifted from the river and fixed themselves on a house about a quarter of a mile further on—a low-roofed, one-storeyed, red-brick house, with a thatched roof and little mullioned windows, from one of which a white blind was fluttering in the evening breeze.

"That's his room," said little Sam Baker to himself. "Poor old Ashurst! He wasn't half a bad old chap; he often let me off a hundred lines; he—poor old Ashurst!" And two large tears burst from the small boy's eyes and rolled down his cheeks.



The boy was right. Where the white blind fluttered was the dominie's bedroom, and there the dominie lay dying. A gaunt, square, ugly room, with panelled walls, on which the paint had cracked and rubbed and blistered, with such furniture as it possessed old fashioned, lumbering, and mean, with evidence of poverty everywhere—evidence of poverty which a woman's hand had evidently tried to screen and soften without much effect. The bed, its well-worn red moreen curtains with a dirty yellow border having been tightly bound round each sculptured post for the admittance of air, stood near the window, on which its occupant frequently turned his glazed and sunken eyes. The sun had gone to rest, the invalid had marked its sinking, and so had those who watched him. The same thought had occurred to all, though not a word had been spoken; but the rosate flush which he leaves behind still lingered in the heavens, and, as if in mockery, gave momentarily to the dying man's cheek a bright healthy hue, such as he was destined never to wear in life again. The flush grew fainter, and faded away, and then a glance at the face, robbed of its artificial glory, must have been conclusive as to the inevitable result. For the cheeks were hollow and sunken, yellowish-white in colour, and cold and clammy to the touch; the eyes, with scarcely any fire left in them, seemed set in large bistre rings; the nose was thin and pinched, and the bloodless lips were tightly compressed with an expression of acute pain.

The Reverend James Ashurst was dying. Every one in Helmingham knew that, and nearly every one had a word of kindness and commiseration for the stricken man, and for his wife and daughter. Dr. Osborne had carried the news up to the Park several days previously, and Sir Thomas had hemmed and coughed and said, "Dear me," and Lady Churchill had shaken her head piteously, on hearing it. "And nothing much to leave in the way of—eh, my dear doctor?" It was the doctor's turn to shake his head then, and he solaced himself with a large pinch of snuff, taken in a flourishing and sonorous manner, before he replied that he believed matters in that way were much worse than people thought; that he did not believe there was a single penny—not a single penny: indeed, it was a thing not to be generally talked of, but he might mention it in the strictest confidence to Sir Thomas and my lady, who had always proved themselves such

good friends to the Ashursts—that was, he had mentioned to Mrs. Ashurst that there was one faint hope of saving her husband's life, if he would submit to a certain operation which only one man in England, Godby, of St. Vitus's Hospital in London, could perform. But when he had mentioned Godby's probable fee—and you could not expect these eminent men to leave their regular work and come down such a long distance under a large sum—he saw at once how the land lay, and that it was impossible for them to raise the money. Miss Ashurst—curious girl that, so determined and all that kind of thing—had indeed pressed him so hard that he had sent his man over to the telegraph office at Brock-sopp with a message, inquiring what would be Godby's exact charge for running down—it was a mere question of distance with these men, so much a mile and so much for the operation—but he knew the sum he had named was not far out.

From the Park Dr. Osborne had driven his very decorous little four-wheeler to Woolgreaves, the residence of the Creswells, his other great patients, and there he had given a modified version of his story, with a very much modified result. For old Mr. Creswell was away in France, and neither of the two young ladies was of an age to feel much sympathy, unless with their intimate relations, and they had been educated abroad, and seen but little of the Helmingham folk; and as for Tom Creswell, he was the imp of the school, having all Sam Baker's love of mischief without any of his good heart, and would not have cared who was ill or who died, provided illness or death afforded occasion for slackening work and making holiday. Every one else in the parish was grieved at the news. The rector—bland, polished, and well endowed with worldly goods—had been most actively compassionate towards his less fortunate brother; the farmers, who looked upon "Master Ashurst" as a marvel of book learning, the labourers who had consented to the removal of the village sports, held from time immemorial on the village green, to a remote meadow whence the noise could not penetrate to the sick man's room, and who had considerably lowered the matter as well as the manner of their singing as they passed the school-house at night in jovial chorus; all these people pitied the old man dying, and the old wife whom he would leave behind. They did not say much about the daughter; when they referred to her it was generally to the effect



that she would manage tolerably well for herself, for "she were a right plucked 'un, Miss Marian were."

They were right. It needed little skill in physiognomy to trace, even under the influence of the special circumstances surrounding her, the pluck, and spirit, and determination in every feature of Marian Ashurst's face. They were patent to the most ordinary beholder; patent in the brown eye, round rather than elongated, small yet bright as a beryl; in the short sharply curved nose, in the delicately rounded chin, which relieved the jaw of a certain fulness, sufficiently characteristic, but scarcely pretty. Variety of expression was Marian's great charm; her mobile features acting under every impulse of her mind, and giving expression to her every thought. Those who had seen her seldom, or only in one mood, would scarcely have recognised her in another. To the old man, lying stretched on his death-bed, she had been a fairy to be worshipped, a plaything to be for ever prized. In his presence the brown eyes were always bright, the small, sharp, white teeth gleamed between the ripe, red lips, and one could scarcely have traced the jaw, that occasionally rose rigid and hard as iron, in the soft expanse of the downy cheek. Had he been able to raise his eyes, he would have seen a very different look in her face as, after bending over the bed and ascertaining that her father slept, she turned to the other occupant of the room, and said, more in the tone of one pondering over and repeating something previously heard than of a direct question:

"A hundred and thirty guineas, mother!"

For a minute Mrs. Ashurst made her no reply. Her thoughts were far away. She could scarcely realise the scene passing round her, though she had pictured it to herself a hundred times, in a hundred different phases. Years ago—how many years ago it seemed!—she was delicate and fragile, and thought she should die before her husband, and she would lie awake for hours in the night, rehearsing her own death-bed, and thinking how she should tell James not to grieve after her, but to marry again, anybody except that Eleanor Shaw, the organist's daughter, and she should be sorry to think of that flighty minx going through the linen and china after she was gone. And now the time had really come, and he was going to be taken from her; he, her James, with his big brown eyes and long silky hair, and

strong lithe figure, as she first remembered him—going to be taken from her now, and leave her an old woman, poor and lone and forlorn—and Mrs. Ashurst tried to stop the tears which rolled down her face, and to reply to her daughter's strange remark.

"A hundred and thirty guineas! Yes, my dear, you're thinking of Mr.—I forget his name—the surgeon. That was the sum he named."

"You're sure of it, mother?"

"Certain sure, my dear! Mr. Casserly, Dr. Osborne's assistant, a very pleasant-spoken young man, showed me the telegraph message, and I read it for myself. It gave me such a turn that I thought I should have dropped, and Mr. Casserly offered me some *sal volatile* or peppermint—I mean of his own accord, and never intended to charge for it, I am sure."

"A hundred and thirty guineas! and the one chance of saving his life is to be lost because we cannot command that sum! Good God! to think of our losing him for want of—Is there no one, mother, from whom we could get it? Think, think! It's of no use sitting crying there! Think, is there no one who could help us in this strait?"

The feeling of dignity which Mrs. Ashurst knew she ought to have assumed was scared by her daughter's earnestness, so the old lady merely fell to smoothing her dress, and, after a minute's pause, said in a tremulous voice,

"I fear there is no one, my dear! The rector, I daresay, would do something, but I'm afraid your father has already borrowed money of him, and I know he has of Mr. King, the chairman of the governors of the school. I don't know whether Mr. Casserly—"

"Mr. Casserly, mother, a parish doctor's drudge! Is it likely that he would be able to assist us?"

"Well, I don't know, my dear, about being able, I'm sure he would be willing! He was so kind about that *sal volatile* that I am sure he would do what—Lord! we never thought of Mr. Creswell!"

Set and hard as Marian's face had been throughout the dialogue, it grew even more rigid as she heard these words. Her lips tightened, and her brow clouded as she said, "Do you think that I should have overlooked that chance, mother? Do you not know that Mr. Creswell is away in France? He is the very first person to whom I should have thought of applying."

Under any other circumstances, Mrs.

Ashurst would have been excessively delighted at this announcement. As it was, she merely said, "The young ladies are at Woolgreaves, I think."

"The young ladies!" repeated Marian, bitterly—"the young ladies! The young dolls—dolts—dummies to try dresses on! What are Maude and Gertrude Creswell to us, mother? What kindness, courtesy even, have they ever shown us? To get their uncle's purse is what we most need—"

"Oh, Marian, Marian!" interrupted Mrs. Ashurst, "what are you saying?"

"Saying?" replied Marian, calmly—"saying? The truth! What should I say, when I know that if we had the command of Mr. Creswell's purse, father's life might—from what I gather from Dr. Osborne most probably would—be saved! Are these circumstances under which one should be meek and mild and thankful for one's lot in life! Is this a time to talk of gratitude and—He's moving! Yes, darling father, Marian is here!"

Two hours afterwards, Marian and Dr. Osborne stood in the porch. There were tears in the eyes of the garrulous but kindly old man; but the girl's eyes were dry, and her face was set harder and more rigid than ever. The doctor was the first to speak.

"Good night, my dear child," said he; "and may God comfort you in your affliction! I have given your poor mother a composing draught, and trust to find her better in the morning. Fortunately, you require nothing of that kind. God bless you, my dear! It will be a consolation to you, as it is to me, to know that your father, my dear old friend, went off perfectly placid and peacefully."

"It is a consolation, doctor—more especially as I believe such an ending is rare with people suffering under his disease."

"His disease, child? Why, what do you think your father died of?"

"Think, doctor? I know! Of the want of a hundred and thirty guineas!"

#### CHAPTER II. RETROSPECTIVE.

THE Reverend James Ashurst had been head master of the Helmingham Grammar School for nearly a quarter of a century. Many old people in the village had a vivid recollection of him as a young man, with his bright brown hair curling over his coat collar, his frank fearless glances, his rapid jerky walk. They recollected how he was by no

means particularly well received by the powers that then were, how he was spoken of as "one of the new school"—a term in itself supposed to convey the highest degree of opprobrium—and how the elders had shaken their heads and prophesied that no good would come of the change, and that it would have been better to have held on to old Dr. Munch, after all. Old Dr. Munch, who had been Mr. Ashurst's immediate predecessor, was as bad a specimen of the old-fashioned, nothing-doing, sinecure-seeking pedagogue as could well be imagined; a rotund, red-faced, gouty-footed divine, with a thick layer of limp white cravat loosely tied round his short neck, and his suit of clerical sables splashed with a culinary spray; a man whose originally small stock of classical learning had gradually faded away, and whose originally large stock of idleness and self-gratification had simultaneously increased. Forty male children, born in lawful wedlock in the parish of Helmingham, and properly presented on the foundation, might have enjoyed the advantages of a free classical and mathematical education at the Grammar School under the will of old Sir Ranulph Clinton, the founder; but, under the lax rule of Dr. Munch, the forty gradually dwindled to twenty, and of these twenty but few attended school in the afternoon, knowing perfectly that for the first few minutes after coming in from dinner the Doctor paid but little attention as to which members of the class might be present, and that in a very few minutes he fell into a state of pleasant and unbroken slumber.

This state of affairs was terrible, and, worst of all, it was getting buzzed abroad. The two or three conscientious boys who really wanted to learn shook their heads in despair, and appealed to their parents to "let them leave;" the score of lads who enjoyed the existing state of affairs were, lad-like, unable to keep it to themselves, and went about calling on their neighbours to rejoice with them; so, speedily, every one knew the state of affairs in Helmingham Grammar School. The trustees of the charity, or "governors," as they were called, had not the least notion how to proceed. They were, for the most part, respectable tradesmen of the place, who had vague ideas about "college" as of a sequestered spot where young men walked about in stuff gowns and trencher caps, and were, by some unexplained circumstance, rendered fit and ready for the bishop to convert into clergymen. There must, they

thought, probably be in this "college" some one fit to take the place of old Dr. Munch, who must be got rid of, come what might. At first, the resident "governors"—the tradesmen of Helmingham—thought it best to write to two of their colleagues, who were non-resident, and not by any manner of means tradesmen, being, in fact, two distinguished peers of the realm, who, holding property in the neighbourhood, had, for political reasons, thought fit to cause themselves to be elected governors of old Sir Ranulph Clinton's foundation. The letters explaining the state of affairs, and asking for advice, were duly written; but matters political were at a standstill just then; there was not the remotest chance of an election for years; and so the two private secretaries of the two noble lords pitched their respective letters into their respective waste-baskets, with mutual grins of pity and contempt for the writers. Thrown back on their own resources, the resident governors determined on applying to the rector; acting under the feeling that he, as a clergyman, must have been to this "college," and would doubtless be able to put them in the way of securing such a man as they required. And they were right. The then rector, though an old man, still kept up occasional epistolary intercourse with such of his coevals as remained at the university in the enjoyment of dignities and fellowships; and, being himself both literate and conscientious, was by no means sorry to lend a hand towards the removal of Dr. Munch, whom he looked upon as a scandal to the cloth. A correspondence entered into between the Rector of Helmingham and the Principal of St. Beowulph's College, Oxford, resulted in the enforced resignation of Dr. Munch as the head master of Helmingham Grammar School, and the appointment of the Reverend James Ashurst as his successor. The old Doctor took his fate very calmly; he knew that for a long time he had been doing nothing, and had been sufficiently well paid for it. He settled down in a pleasant village in Kent, where an old crony of his held the position of warden to a City Company's charity, and this history knows him no more.

When James Ashurst received his appointment he was about eight-and-twenty, had taken a double second class, had been scholar and tutor of his college, and stood well for a fellowship. By nature silent and reserved, and having found it necessary for the achievement of his position to renounce

nearly all society—for he was by no means a brilliant man, and his successes had been gained by plodding industry, and constant application rather than by the exercise of any natural talent—James Ashurst had but few acquaintances, and to them he never talked of his private affairs. They wondered when they heard that he had renounced certain prospects, notably those of a fellowship, for so poor a preferment as two hundred pounds a year and a free house: for they did not know that the odd, shy, silent man had found time in the intervals of his reading to win the heart of a pretty, trusting girl, and that the great hope of his life, that of being able to marry her and take her to a decent home of which she would be mistress, was about to be accomplished.

On a dreary, dull day, in the beginning of a bitter January, Mr. Ashurst arrived at Helmingham. He found the schoolhouse dirty, dingy, and uncomfortable, bearing traces everywhere of the negligence and squalor of its previous occupant; but the chairman of the governors, who met him on his arrival, told him that it should be thoroughly cleaned and renovated during the Easter holidays, and the mention of those holidays caused James Ashurst's heart to leap and throb with an intensity with which house-painting could not possibly have anything to do. In the Easter holidays he was to make Mary Bridger his wife, and that thought sustained him splendidly during the three dreary intervening months, and helped him to make head against a sea of troubles raging round him. For the task on which he had entered was no easy one. Such boys as had remained in the school under the easy rule of Dr. Munch were of a class much lower than that for which the benefits of the foundation had been contemplated by the benevolent old knight, and having been unaccustomed to any discipline, had arrived at a pitch of lawlessness which required all the new master's energy to combat. This necessary strictness made him unpopular with the boys, and, at first, with their parents, who made loud complaints of their children being "put upon," and in some cases where bodily punishment had been inflicted retribution had been threatened. Then, the chief tradespeople and the farmers, among whom Dr. Munch had been a daily and nightly guest, drinking his mug of ale or his tumbler of brandy-and-water, smoking his long clay pipe, taking his hand at whist, and listening, if not with pleasure,

at any rate without remonstrance, to language and stories more than sufficiently broad and indecorous, found that Mr. Ashurst civilly, but persistently, refused their proffered hospitality, and in consequence pronounced him "stuck-up." No man was more free from class prejudices, but he had been bred in old Somerset country society, where the squirearchy maintained an almost feudal dignity, and his career in college had not taught him the policy of being on terms of familiarity with those whom Fortune had made his inferiors.

So James Ashurst struggled on during the first three months of his novitiate at Helmingham, earnestly and energetically striving to do his duty, with, it must be confessed, but poor result. The governors of the school had been so impressed by the rector's recommendation, and by the testimonials which the new master had submitted to them, that they expected to find the regeneration of the establishment would commence immediately upon James Ashurst's appearance upon the scene, and were rather disappointed when they found that, while the number of scholars remained much the same as at the time of Dr. Munch's retirement, the general dissatisfaction in the village was much greater than it had ever been during the reign of that summarily-treated pedagogue. The rector, to be sure, remained true to the choice he had recommended, and maintained everywhere that Mr. Ashurst had done very well in the face of the greatest difficulties, and would yet bring Helmingham into notice. Notwithstanding constant ocular proof to the contrary, the farmers held that in the clerical profession, as in freemasonry, there was a certain occult something beyond the ordinary ken, which bound members of "the cloth" together, and induced them to support each other to the utmost stretch of their consciences—a proceeding which, in the opinion of free-thinking Helmingham, allowed of a considerable amount of elasticity.

At length the long looked for Easter tide arrived, and James Ashurst hurried away from the dull grey old midland-country village, to the bright little Thames-bordered town where lived his love. A wedding with the church approach one brilliant pathway of spring flowers, a honeymoon of such happiness as one knows but once in a lifetime, passed in the lovely lake country, and then Helmingham again. But with a different aspect. The old schoolhouse itself,

brave in fresh paint and new plaster, its renovated diamond windows, its cleaned slab, so classically eloquent on the merits fundatoris nostri, let in over the porch, its newly stuccoed fives' wall and fresh gravelled playground; all this was strange but intelligible. But James Ashurst could not understand yet the change that had come over his inner life. To return after a hard day's grinding in a mill of boys to his own rooms, was, during the first three months of his career at Helmingham merely to exchange active purpose for passive existence. Now, his life did but begin when the labours of the day were over, and he and his wife passed the evenings together, in planning to combat with the present, in delightful anticipations of the future. Mr. Ashurst unwittingly and without the least intending it, had made a very lucky hit in his selection of a wife, so far as the Helmingham people were concerned. He was "that bumptious" as they expressed it, or as we will more charitably say, he was so independent, as not to care one rap what the Helmingham people thought of anything he did, provided he had, as indeed at that time he always had—for he was conscientious in the highest degree—the knowledge that he was acting rightly according to his light. In a very few weeks the sweetness, the quiet frankness, the prepossessing charm of Mrs. Ashurst's demeanour, had neutralised all the ill-effects of her husband's three months' previous career. She was a small-boned, small-featured, delicate-looking little woman, and, as such, excited a certain amount of compassion and kindness amid the midland-county ladies, who, as their husbands said of them, "ran big." It was a positive relief to one to hear her soft little treble voice after the booming diapason of the Helmingham ladies, or to see her pretty little fat dimpled hands flashing here and there in some coquetry of needle-work, after being accustomed to looking on at the steady play of particularly bony and knuckly members, in the unremitting torture of eminently utilitarian employment. High and low, gentle and simple, rich and poor, felt equally kindly disposed towards Mrs. Ashurst. Mrs. Peacock, wife of Squire Peacock, a tremendous magnate and squire of the neighbouring parish, fell so much in love with her that she made her husband send their only son, a magnificent youth destined eventually for Eton, Oxford, Parliament, and a partnership in a brewery, to be introduced to the Muses at a parlour-



boarder in Mr. Ashurst's house, and Hiram Brooks, the blacksmith and minister of the Independent Chapel, who was at never-ending war with all the members of the Establishment, made a special exception in Mrs. Ashurst's favour, and doffed his greasy leathern cap to her as she passed the forge.

And his pretty little wife brought him good fortune, as well as domestic happiness. James Ashurst delighted to think so. His popularity in the village, and in the surrounding country was on the increase; the number of scholars on the foundership had reached its authorised limit (a source of great gratification, though of no pecuniary profit, to the head master); and Master Peacock had now two or three fellow-boarders, each of whom paid a fine annual sum. The governors thought better of their head master now, and the old rector had lived long enough to see his recommendation thoroughly accepted, and his prophecy, as regarded the improved status of the school, duly fulfilled. Popular, successful in his little way, and happy in his domestic relations, James Ashurst had but one want. His wife was childless, and this was to him a source of discomfort, always felt and occasionally expressed. He was just the man who would have doated on a child, would have suffered himself to have been pleasantly befooled by its gambols, and have worshipped it in every phase of its tyranny. But it was not to be, he supposed; that was to be the one black drop in his draught of happiness: and then, after he had been married for five or six years, Mrs. Ashurst brought him a little daughter. His hopes were accomplished, but he nearly lost his wife in their accomplishment; while he dandled the newly born treasure in his arms, Mrs. Ashurst's life was despaired of, and when the chubby baby had grown up into a strong child, and from that sphere of life had softened down into a peaceful girl, her mother, always slight and delicate, had become a constant invalid, whose ill health caused her husband the greatest anxiety, and almost did away with the delight he had in anticipating every wish of his darling little Marian.

James Ashurst had longed for a child, and he loved his little daughter dearly when she came, but even then his wife held the deepest and most sacred place in his heart, and as he marked her faded cheek and lustreless eye, he felt a pang of remorse, and accused himself of having set himself up against the just judgment of Providence, and of having now received the

due reward of his repining. For one who thought his darling must be restored to health, no sacrifice could be too great to accomplish that result; and the Helmingham people, who loved Mrs. Ashurst dearly, but who in their direst straits were never accustomed to look for any other advice than that which could be afforded them by Dr. Osborne, or his village opponent, Mr. Sharood, were struck with admiration when Dr. Langton, the great county physician, the oracle of Brocksopp, was called into consultation. Dr. Langton was a very little man, noted almost as much for his reticence as for his skill. He never wasted a word. After a careful examination of Mrs. Ashurst he pronounced it to be a tiresome case, and prescribed a four months' residence at the baths of Ems, as the likely treatment to effect a mitigation, if not a cure. Dr. Osborne, after the great man's departure, laughed aloud in his bluff way at the idea of a country schoolmaster sending his wife to Ems. "Langton is so much in the habit of going about among the country families, and these novi homines of manufacturers who stink of brass, as they say in these parts, that he forgets there is such a thing as having to look carefully at ways and means, my dear Ashurst, and make both dovetail! Baths of Ems, indeed! I'm afraid you've thrown away your ten guineas, my good friend, if that's all you've got out of Langton!" But Dr. Osborne's smile was suddenly checked when Mr. Ashurst said very quietly that as his wife's health was dearer to him than anything on earth, and that as there was no sacrifice which he would not make to accomplish its restoration, he should find means of sending her to Germany, and of keeping her there until it was seen what effect the change had on her.

And he did it! For two successive summers Mrs. Ashurst went to Ems with the old nurse who had brought her up, and accompanied her from her pretty river-side home to Helmingham; and at the end of the second season she returned comparatively well and strong. But she needed all her strength and health when she looked at her husband when he came to meet her in London, and found him thin, changed, round-shouldered, and hollow-eyed, the very shadow of his former self. James Ashurst had carried through his plans as regarded his wife at enormous sacrifice. He had no ready money to meet the sudden call upon his purse which such an expedi-



tion rendered necessary, and he had recourse to money-lenders to raise the first loans required; then to friends to pay the interest on and to obtain renewals of these loans; then to other money-lenders to replace the original sums; and then to other friends to repay a portion of the first friendly loans, until, by the time his wife returned from the second visit to the Continent, he found himself so inextricably involved that he dared not face his position, dared not think of it himself, much less take her into his confidence, and so he went blindly on, paying interest on interest, and hoping ever, with a vague hope, for some relief from his troubles.

That relief never came to James Ashurst in his lifetime. He struggled on in the same hopeless, helpless, hand-to-mouth fashion for about eight years more, always impecunious in the highest degree, always intending to retrieve his fallen fortune, always slowly, but surely, breaking and becoming less and less of a man under the harass of pecuniary troubles, when the illness which for some time had threatened him set in, and, as we have seen, he died.

#### DICK STEELE.

THERE are characters to whom History vouchsafes no more than a passing sneer or a disparaging monosyllable. Whether, for instance, she guides the pen of Johnson, of Scott, of Macaulay, or of Thackeray, the most dignified of the Muses misses no opportunity of calling the author of *The Christian Hero* "Dick." Sir Richard Steele is seldom distinguished in her pages by his proper title without a spirit of merriment, as if royalty had knighted him in jest. Yet the mere mention of his beloved and loving partner in genius and in fame, is always graced with some prefix of respect. Where, in the annals of the Augustan age of English literature, does History condescend to sport with the memory of the Right Honourable Joseph Addison, and call him "Joe"?

This difference in distinguishing Steele from his friend is the more painful to those who admire him for the sake of his works, because it is greatly deserved. Contemporary and subsequent opinion has, no doubt, been harsh in selecting "Dick's" sins, as the sponsors who gave him that name; but his many virtues were obscured from all, except from his intimate companions. His own irrepressible candour flourished his worst faults in the faces of Mankind; who must not, therefore, be blamed for forming their judgment of him from the only evidence presented to them on the surface. With Addison the result was precisely opposite. The surface of his character shone with a polish that always commanded

respect; and it was natural that his failings, concealed within a grave and stately exterior, should never have linked his name with the lightest touch of familiarity.

But, besides the personal shortcomings which Steele was too open-hearted to conceal, he laboured under a disadvantage from which his foremost associates were free; but which has since been entirely overlooked. During the time of his greatest popularity the doctrine of Caste was paramount. Reaction from the grand democratic convulsion of the previous century, had produced a democracy blind to its own interests. Tory mobs passionately assaulted opponents of passive obedience and the divine right of kings. So fervent was the worship of the Tuft, that the public at large liked their nobility and gentry the better for lording it over them. A fool of quality held his own, as a matter of course, against a Solon of humble birth, even in good company. Whatever the discussion, a well-born disputant in danger of defeat had only to ask the question, "Who are you, sir?" to be certain of victory, if his adversary's answer denoted him to be nothing better than a plebeian. In case of any sort of confusion respecting paternity, defeat would be the more crushing. This kind of humiliation Sir Richard Steele had constantly to endure. When teaching in the Tatler "the minuter decencies and inferior duties of life," Steele excited the ire of all the sharpeners, duellists, rakes, mohocks, sots, and swearers extant. The more prominent ruffians of gentle blood retorted upon him the withering non sequitur that nobody could find out who his father was. When he insisted, in his famous *Crisis*, that Dunkirk should be demolished according to treaty, Dr. Wagstaffe thought he had demolished Steele, by logically declaring that "he was ashamed of his name," and that he owed "his birth and condition to a place more barbarous than Carrickfergus." As a convincing argument against reinstating him in the governorship of Drury Lane Theatre, Dennis taunted him with being "descended from a trooper's horse;" the elegant sentence finishing with such a fling at his colleague, Cibber, as unmistakably directed the venom against Steele's birth, and not against a well-known incident in his youthful career. The authors of the *Examiner*, of the *Female Tatler*, and other scandalisers flung—with more dirt—doubts at his origin, and Steele cleared it all off, except that which defiled his name. If he had been once for all explicit on that head, his foes would have ceased to trouble him, and the doubt would have ceased to trouble his friends. It manifestly did trouble them. In the last number of the *Englishman*, Steele wrote thus: "In compliance to the prepossessions of others, rather than, as I think it a matter of consideration myself, I assert (that no nice man of my acquaintance may think himself polluted by conversing with me) that whoever talks to me is speaking to a gentleman born." No more. Neither in Steele's private correspondence, nor in his public writings is this assertion coupled

with any more specific statement; and, although no gentleman is called upon to plead pedigree in abatement of abuse levelled at his early history, yet his friends can always put in that plea for him when proper data are to be obtained. Delicacy in the days of Dennis, Curl, Tutchin, Ridpath, Roper, Wagstaffe, Savage, Mrs. Manley, Pope, and Swift, could not in the least have restrained his friends; for the secrets of private life were marshalled and made public for party purposes, on both sides of every question, with lavish coarseness. Yet the necessary information can nowhere be picked out of the voluminous legacies left by Steele's contemporaries. Even Death, which breaks the seals of many mysteries, revealed nothing but perplexity. In no immediate notice of Steele's demise are his birth and parentage distinctly set forth. Curl, in a memoir published a year after that event, hits the mark no nearer than this: "Being descended from English parents, he used to call himself an Englishman born in Dublin."

The further Time floats us away from the sources of evidence, the fewer doubts remain. Open any biographical essay, dictionary, or any cyclopaedia, and you will find it stated, without qualification, that Richard Steele's father was an Irish councillor-at-law and private secretary to James, first Duke of Ormond, and that his mother's name was Gascoigne. The date of his birth has never been so confidently stated. Every year has received that honour from 1671 to 1676. The General Dictionary of Birch and Lockman gives no date; the Biographia Britannica mentions 1676; Nathan Drake, 1675; and 1672 has been noted down more than once: 1671 has remained the fashion since the publication, by Nichols, of Steele's Epistolary Correspondence, for a reason which will be set forth presently.

Thanks to Sir Bernard Burke—the present successor both of Steele's uncle, Gascoigne, and of his friend Addison, as keeper of the Birmingham Record Tower in Dublin Castle—the lists of counsel in the Four Courts have been searched. No one named Steele appears in them within the required period; but a Richard Steele was admitted a member of the King's Inns as an attorney, in 1667. Again, no gentleman named Steele served James, first Duke of Ormond, as private secretary. Neither in the records of Kilkenny Castle, nor in the papers abstracted thence by Carte (when he wrote the life of Marlborough's rival) and deposited them in the Bodleian Library, does the name of Steele occur in any official matter but once, and then it belonged to a lawyer's clerk, who was paid a small sum of money on account of his master. Henry Gascoigne, Dick Steele's uncle, succeeded Sir George Lane as the duke's secretary in 1674.

The earliest authentic notice of the date of Steele's birth is thus recorded in the registers of the London Charter House, for November 17th, 1684:

"Richard Steel admitted for the Duke of Ormond, in the room of Phillip Burrell—aged 13 years 12th March next."

Reckoning that 12th day of March, according

to the old style, to be still in the year 1684, the date of Steele's birth would thus be fixed in 1671. It happens that an entry exists in the registers of St. Bride's Church, Dublin, which coincides exactly—too exactly, perhaps—with this register: "Chrissnings commencing from the 25th of March, 1671.\* March ye 12th, Richard, sonn of Richard Steele, baptised."

This date, therefore, has been generally adopted as Steele's birthday, ever since the above document was made known by Nichols, in his preface to Steele's Epistolary Correspondence. A copy of it, certified by a clergyman and two churchwardens, appears amongst Steele's loose papers in the British Museum, at the back of a calculation of the profits of Drury Lane Theatre in 1721, something in cypher about The Fishpool, and the address of a chemist in Westminster. Why it was obtained, or whether acknowledged by Steele as certifying his own date of birth, can never be ascertained. It sets forth, in fact, no more than the date of a baptism performed—if it record the baptism of Sir Richard—before the baby was a day old. This slender improbability got over, the two documents harmonise sufficiently to set doubt at rest. But a third memorandum, in the register of matriculations of the University of Oxford, revives it:

"Ædes Christi.

"Ter 2 Hilarii 1689. Mar. 13. Ric. Steele 16. R. S. Dublin Gen."

Expanded and translated reading thus: "On the 13th of March, in Hilary Term, 1688 Richard Steele, of Christ Church, sixteen years of age, son of Richard Steele of Dublin, gentleman." Had the father been a barrister, he would have been designated "esquire."

If Steele completed his sixteenth year only at the above date, he must have been born in the year 1673. This entry, and that at the Charter House, are equally authentic, and equally contradictory of each other; but does it matter to the world at large whether Steele's father was English or Irish, a councillor, the private secretary to a duke, or not; or in what year Steele himself was born? These doubts will not lessen Sir Richard's value to posterity as a genial humourist, a kind sympathetic censor, and a sound politician. They can neither dim nor brighten the lustre of his fame—and they are only put forward here to illustrate some of Steele's early letters, which now see the light in print for the first time.

By the courtesy of the Marquis of Ormonde, the present writer has been granted access to the archives of Kilkenny Castle, where the following characteristic letters were discovered amidst a dazzling treasury of historical documents dating from Brian Boroihm downwards. They are addressed to Dick's "uncle," Henry Gascoigne, the then Duke of Ormond's private secretary. They are printed exactly as written.

Jan. 5 [1690]

Sir,—My Tutour has received ye Certificate for seven pound, for which I most humbly

\* New Year's-day, old style.

thank you. I have been w<sup>th</sup> Dr Hough who received y<sup>r</sup> letter and Enquired very Civilly after You and my Ladye's health. When I took my leave of him he desired me to inform him, if at any time he could be servicable or assistant to me for he would very readily do it. Dr Aldridge Gives he's Service to y<sup>r</sup>, and told me he should write to you himself by this post. This is all at present from y<sup>r</sup> most humble Servt and ever-obedient nephew

R. STEELE.

Pray S<sup>r</sup> direct letters to me myself for 'tis something troublesome to my Tutour y<sup>r</sup> I am and have been very much indisposed by a bile just over my left eye; but I think it mends now.

Postmark March 31 [1690].

S<sup>r</sup>.—I received your letter, and gave Mr. Sherwin his paper from you. Most of the money he had in his hands was before disposed of, therefore he gave me but five pounds, but he will give the rest next Wednesday, till which time I defer my giving y<sup>r</sup> A true and particular account how my Tutour and I design to dispose of the whole; the night after I writ my last Mr. Horne sent for me to the tavern, where he and Mr. Wood a fellow of that Coll., treated me with Claret and Oysters. I went to give him an account of what you commanded me, but I shall Do at the first Opportunity. Our Dean whome you expected Is, I suppose now at London, the election for students is not very far off now; if y<sup>r</sup> would be pleased to speak to him or purchase from my Lord a word or two; it would perhaps get me the most Creditable preferment for young men in the whole university there are many here that think of it, but none speak their mind; the places are wholly in the Dean and Cannon's dispose without respect to Schollarship; but if you will vouchsafe to use your interest in my behalf there shall be nothing wanting in the endeavours of Your most obedient nephew

and most humble servant  
R. STEELE.

The Dean has two in his gift. My most humble duty to my lady.

May 14.

S<sup>r</sup>.—I have received the Bundle My Lady sent to me And do most humbly thank ye for that and all the rest of y<sup>r</sup> favours, but my request to you now is that you would compleat all the rest by soliciting the Dean who is now in London in my behalfe for a student's place here; I am satisfied that I stand very fair in his favour. He saw one of my Exercises in the House and commended it very much and said y<sup>r</sup> if I went on in me Study he did not question but I should make something more than ordinary. I had this from my Tutour. I have I think a good character throughout the whole Coll; I speake not this f<sup>r</sup> out of any vanity or affectation but to let you know that I have not been altogether negligent on my part: these places are not given by merit but acquired by friends, though I question not but so generous a man as our Dean would rather prefer one that was a Scholar before another. I have had so

great advantage in being\* \*\*\* my own abilities are so very mean I believe there are very few of the Gown in the Coll. so good scholars as I am. My Tutour before told me that if you should be pleased to use your interest for me, or p<sup>r</sup> my lord's letter or word in my behalfe; it would certainly do my businesse. And y<sup>r</sup> Friend Dr. Hough the new Bishop of Oxon, I believe may doe much now, for Dr. Aldrich is, as it were, his Dean. Perhaps, Sir, you may be modest in soliciting him, because you may think others trouble him for the same thing; But pray, S<sup>r</sup>, don't let that hinder you for it will be the same case next Election, and if we misse this opportunity 'tis ten to one whether we ever have such another; besides the Dean won't have a place again this three year; therefore I beseech you S<sup>r</sup> as you have been always heretofore very good to me to use your utmost Endeavour now in my behalfe And assure y<sup>r</sup>self that whatever preferment I ever attain to shall never make me ingratelully forget, and not acknowledge the authour of all my advancement but I shall ever be proud of writing myself Your most obliged and

Hum: Ser<sup>t</sup>

RICH: STEELE.

On a sheet of drafted letters on various matters in Henry Gascoigne's writing, one of which bears date May 27, 1690 (commencing, "I was on ship-board about 3 weeks ago, when I sprained my right arm," which may account for the delay), is the following memorandum: "That your lds<sup>hip</sup> will be pleased to befriend Dick Steele, who is now entered in Ch. Ch., by getting him a student's place there, or something else, to Exce: mee of charges beside what is allowed him by the Charter House." The Duke of Ormond was Chancellor of the University of Oxford.

This request was not granted, but an equivalent was obtained. Steele eventually became a postmaster of Merton College. This letter is addressed to Gascoigne's wife.

Honoured Madam,

Out of a deep sense of y<sup>r</sup> la<sup>ty</sup> Goodnesse Towards me, I could not forbear accusing myselfe of Ingratitude in omitting my duty, by not acknowledging y<sup>r</sup> la<sup>ty</sup> favours by frequent letters; but how to excuse myself as to that point I know not, but must humbly hope<sup>r</sup> as you have been alwaies soe bountiful to me as to encourage my endeavours, so y<sup>r</sup> will be soe mercifull to me as to pardon my faults and neglects. but, Madam, should I expresse my gratitude for every benefit y<sup>r</sup> I receive at y<sup>r</sup> la<sup>ty</sup> and my good Vnkle, I should never sit down to meat but I must write a letter when I rise from table; for to his goodnesse I humbly acknowledge my being. but, Mada<sup>m</sup>, not to be too tedious, I shall only subscribe myself Mada<sup>m</sup>, y<sup>r</sup> la<sup>ty</sup>

Humble servant and obedient though unworthy nephew

R. STEELE.

\* End of page torn away, and one line illegible.

Pray mada<sup>n</sup> give my duty to my unkle and my good Ant, and my love to my Ingenious Cousin and humble service to good Mrs. Dwight.

Some of these letters are indorsed with the dates in Henry Gascoigne's hand "Dick Steele."

Always Dick from the beginning!

### PERVIGILIUM VENERIS.

(PARAPHRASED.)

THIS poem, commonly printed amongst the verses "attributed to Gallus," was asserted by Erasmus to have been written by Catullus, and by Saumasius to be the work of some unknown poet of the middle ages. The supposition, however, which attributes the authorship of the poem to Annæus Florus, has been sanctioned by Wernsdorf; and certainly, whatever be the period which produced the *Pervigilium Veneris*, it would seem to have been a period of literary *decadence*, such as the age of Hadrian. That which has tempted to a paraphrase of this little poem is the essentially modern character of it. Its defects have the sort of charm which belongs to features the most faulty, if those features strengthen the family likeness in the countenance of a kinsman.

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,

Ye that never have loved before!

And to-morrow, again to-morrow,

Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

New is now the song I sing,

As the freshness of the morn

In the sweetness of the Spring,

When the old world is new-born.

In the Spring the loves assemble,

And the birds in budded bowers;

In the Spring the young leaves tremble

To wet kissings of sun showers.

'Tis the Spring time, and to-morrow,

All among the leafy groves,

Shall divine Dione borrow,

To make cradles for her Loves,

Myrtle branches glad and green.

And, to-morrow, lord and king

Love shall be, from morn to e'en,

Of the kingdoms of the Spring,

And Love's Mother, lady and queen,

These shall rule the world, I ween.

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,

Ye that never have loved before!

And to-morrow, again to-morrow,

Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

Form'd from out the white sea foam

And pure ichor all divine,

'Mid those azure flocks that roam

Pastured on the breezy brine,

When the Spring was on the earth,

And the Spring's warmth in the water,

Did old Ocean's joy give birth

To his wave-born wanton daughter,

Therefore to Dione dear

Is the birth-time of the year.

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,

Ye that never have loved before!

And to-morrow, again to-morrow,

Ye that *have* loved, love once more.

She it is, with gemmy blossoms,

That doth paint the purple year.

She, from whose abundant bosoms

(While the amorous atmosphere

Hums for joy) fresh-bubbled showers

Brim the milk-pails warm and white.

She, at morning, decks the flowers

With the lucid tears of night:

Dewy drops, whose downward brightness,

Pausing, trembling, seems to fall,

Yet, sustained by its own lightness,

Cannot leave those petals small!

Silver drops, from stars distill'd

By the balmy night serene:

Silent, sliding touches, skill'd

To unloose that clinging green

Woven the warm buds around

With such quaint concealing care;

Which their sweet breasts, yet unbound,

Do, for virgin vesture, wear;

Till the maiden flowers, at morn,

Blushing meet the enamoured sun

For whose kisses they were born;

Trembling, glowing, one by one

(Timorous and naked brides!) Each from out her secret bower,

Where no more chill April hides

What to find the wistful shower,

Sighing low, the leaves divide,

Flower peeps forth after flower.

O that blush of maiden woo'd,

When her virgin love is won!

What is like it? Cypris' blood

And the kiss of Cypris' Son,

And the morning's purple wings,

And the ruby's burning heart,

These, and all delicious things,

Of its beauty are but part!

Yesterday, O trembling maid,

Buried those ripe blushes lay

Under virgin snows, afraid

Of the tale they tell to-day:

Yesterday, that little breast,

Happy bride, hid joy, like sorrow,

Fearful, in its flutter'd vest.

Love shall loose the strings to-morrow.

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,

Ye that never have loved before!

And to-morrow, again to-morrow,

Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

She, their gentle Deity,

Calls the nymphs in myrtle grove.

But their leader? Who is he,

If he be not arm'd Love?

No. To-day is holiday.

Love hath laid his arms aside.

Naked will he sport and play,

All the amorous Spring-tide,

Lest his bow and arrows trim,

Or his torch, should do some ill.

Yet, O nymphs, beware of him!

Naked Love is weapon'd still.

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,

Ye that never have loved before!

And to-morrow, again to-morrow,

Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

Maidens, chaste and pure as thou,

Virgin Delia, to thee

Venus sends us. Prithee now

To our revels welcome be.

Leave our pleasant grove unstain'd

By the blood of savage beast,

And, by maiden prayers constrain'd,

Deign to grace our jocund feast.

Nights of azure weather three,

Dancing these dim woods of thine,

Thou our merry troops shalt see

Crown'd with roses and myrtle twine.

Ceres will not be away;

Nor the tippling Bacchus, Lady;

Nor the Lord of lyric lay;

All along the leafage shady

(If thou wilt not say us nay)

Thee to charm, the sweet night long,

We will chaunt our roundelay;

And thyself shalt praise our song.

Prithee, Delia, do not stay

From Dione's court to-day.



Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,  
 Ye that never have loved before!  
 And to-morrow, again to-morrow,  
 Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

She, amidst Hyblæan flowers,  
 Bids us build her florid throne;  
 And in this light court of ours  
 Lightly is her bidding done.  
 All the Graces will be there,  
 Hybla all her flowers will lend:  
 Treasures which the opulent year  
 Doth to her, in tribute, send:  
 Flowers many more than ever  
 Bloom'd on Enna's meadow banks,  
 Flowers from every lawn and river  
 That doth owe Dione thanks!  
 And the maidens all will come  
 From the vales and from the mountains;  
 Leaving, these their woodland home,  
 Those their haunts in happy fountains,  
 Here the nymphs are hastening:  
 Whilst outspeeding one another,  
 Boys and maidens homage bring  
 To the Boy-God's winged Mother,  
 But she bids you, while 'tis Spring,  
 Boys and maidens both beware,  
 Since she let's young love go bare.

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,  
 Ye that never have loved before!  
 And to-morrow, again to-morrow,  
 Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

Beauty's self hath bid us gather  
 Beauteous buds, and bring them to her.  
 For the all-paternal Æther,  
 He, the green world's earliest wooer,  
 Wills that, to his warm embrace,  
 Her most bounteous womb shall bear  
 (Youngest of an ancient race!)  
 Yet another infant year.  
 On her balmy bosom fall  
 In delicious dew and rains  
 His prolific kisses all;  
 Whose sweet influence the deep veins  
 Of the Mighty Mother fill  
 With such throbbing joys as pant  
 Into visible forms, and thrill  
 Every green and grassy haunt,  
 Lawn, and lake, and dale, and hill,  
 With love's labour procreant.  
 Over heaven, and over earth,  
 On thro' rill, and river, and ocean,  
 Moves the mystic spirit of birth,  
 With a soft and secret motion;  
 And his breath, with raptures rife,  
 Opens the glowing gates of life.

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,  
 Ye that never have loved before,  
 And to-morrow, again to-morrow,  
 Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

She, the household gods of Troy  
 Into royal Latium led.  
 She to her illustrious boy  
 The Laurentian virgin wed;  
 Gave to Mars, in snatched embrace,  
 Lips too sweet for Vesta's shrine;  
 And the Romulean race  
 Married to the Sabine line:  
 Whence the lordly Roman springs,  
 Whence the Conscript Fathers were,  
 Knights, Quirites, king-born kings,  
 Cæsar's self, and Cæsar's heir!

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,  
 Ye that never have loved before!  
 And to-morrow, again to-morrow,  
 Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

Far i' the fields doth pleasure stray:  
 Far i' the fields is Venus found:

Love, himself, was born, they say,  
 Far i' the fields, on flowery ground.  
 Him the grassy lawns did guard,  
 From his happy hour of birth;  
 He was born on thymy sward:  
 He was nurst by Rural Mirth.

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,  
 Ye that never have loved before!  
 And to-morrow, again to-morrow,  
 Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

Now his gentle yoke he throws  
 Over all things far and wide.  
 Hark! the lusty bullock lows  
 After his brown-spotted bride.  
 The chill ocean's uncouth droves  
 Couple in their briny bowers:  
 And the birds pursue their loves,  
 Singing from their leafy towers.  
 Even the wild swan's marriage hymn,  
 Thro' the reedy marish rings:  
 And in poplar shadows dim  
 All night Philomela sings.  
 Who that hears her happy song  
 Could believe that voice laments  
 A loved sister's bitter wrong?  
 No! she sings, and, singing, vents  
 Pain (if pain at all) made such  
 By a too great stress of gladness,  
 Joy, that were not joy so much  
 If there were no joy in sadness!  
 She, and all things else, do sing.  
 I, alone? shall I be dumb  
 When to me the long-wisist Spring  
 Of my love's sweet prime is come?  
 Nay, if I were silent now,  
 Would not my dishonour'd Muse  
 Voice, name, fame, and laurel bough,  
 Evermore to me refuse?  
 Which were then deserved most,  
 Mine, or weak Amycla's fate,  
 Whom her coward silence lost  
 When the foe was at the gate?

Love, to-morrow! love, to-morrow,  
 Ye that never have loved before!  
 And to-morrow, again to-morrow,  
 Ye that *have* loved, love once more!

## NEW UNCOMMERCIAL SAMPLES.

BY CHARLES DICKENS.

ABOARD SHIP.

My journeys as Uncommercial Traveller for the firm of Human Interest Brothers, have not slackened since I last reported of them, but have kept me continually on the move. I remain in the same idle employment. I never solicit an order, I never get any commission, I am the rolling stone that gathers no moss—unless any should by chance be found among these Samples.

Some half a year ago, I found myself in my idlest, dreamiest, and least accountable condition altogether, on board-ship, in the harbour of the City of New York, in the United States of America. Of all the good ships afloat, mine was the good steam-ship RUSSIA, CAPTAIN COOK, Cunard line, bound for Liverpool. What more could I wish for?

I had nothing to wish for, but a prosperous passage. My salad-days, when I was



green of visage and sea-sick, being gone with better things (and worse), no coming event cast its shadow before. I might, but a few moments previously, have imitated Sterne, and said, "And yet, methinks, Eugenius"—laying my forefinger wistfully on his coat-sleeve thus—"and yet, methinks, Eugenius, 'tis but sorry work to part with thee, for what fresh fields \* \* \* my dear Eugenius \* \* \* can be fresher than thou art, and in what pastures new shall I find Eliza—or call her, Eugenius, if thou wilt, Annie,"—"I say I might have done this, but Eugenius was gone, and I hadn't done it.

I was resting on a skylight on the hurricane-deck, watching the working of the ship very slowly about, that she might head for England. It was high noon on a most brilliant day in April, and the beautiful bay was glorious and glowing. Full many a time, on shore there, had I seen the snow come down, down, down (itself like down), until it lay deep in all the ways of men, and particularly, as it seemed, in my way, for I had not gone dry-shod many hours for months. Within two or three days last past, had I watched the feathery fall setting in with the ardour of a new idea, instead of dragging at the skirts of a worn out winter, and permitting glimpses of a fresh young spring. But a bright sun and a clear sky had melted the snow in the great crucible of nature, and it had been poured out again that morning over sea and land, transformed into myriads of gold and silver sparkles.

The ship was fragrant with flowers. Something of the old Mexican passion for flowers may have gradually passed into North America, where flowers are luxuriously grown and tastefully combined in the richest profusion; but be that as it may, such gorgeous farewells in flowers had come on board, that the small Officer's Cabin on deck, which I tenanted, bloomed over into the adjacent scuppers, and banks of other flowers that it couldn't hold, made a garden of the unoccupied tables in the passengers' saloon. These delicious scents of the shore, mingling with the fresh airs of the sea, made the atmosphere a dreamy, an enchanting one. And so, with the watch aloft setting all the sails, and with the screw below revolving at a mighty rate, and occasionally giving the ship an angry shake for resisting, I fell into my idlest ways and lost myself.

As, for instance, whether it was I lying there, or some other entity even more mysterious, was a matter I was far too lazy to

look into. What did it signify to me if it were I—or to the more mysterious entity—if it were he? Equally as to the remembrances that drowsily floated by me—or by him—why ask when, or where, the things happened? Was it not enough that they befel at some time, somewhere?

There was that assisting at the Church Service on board another steam-ship, one Sunday, in a stiff breeze. Perhaps on the passage out. No matter. Pleasant to hear the ship's bells go, as like church-bells as they could; pleasant to see the watch off duty mustered, and come in; best hats, best Guernseys, washed hands and faces, smoothed heads. But then arose a set of circumstances so rampantly comical, that no check which the gravest intentions could put upon them would hold them in hand. Thus the scene. Some seventy passengers assembled at the saloon tables. Prayer-books on tables. Ship rolling heavily. Pause. No minister. Rumour has related that a modest young clergyman on board has responded to the captain's request that he will officiate. Pause again, and very heavy rolling. Closed double doors suddenly burst open, and two strong stewards skate in, supporting minister between them. General appearance as of somebody picked up, drunk and incapable, and under conveyance to station-house. Stoppage, pause, and particularly heavy rolling. Stewards watch their opportunity, and balance themselves, but cannot balance minister: who, struggling with a drooping head and a backward tendency, seems determined to return below, while they are as determined that he shall be got to the reading-desk in mid-saloon. Desk portable, sliding away down a long table, and aiming itself at the breasts of various members of the congregation. Here the double doors, which have been carefully closed by other stewards, fly open again, and worldly passenger tumbles in, seemingly with Pale Ale designs: who, seeking friend, says "Joe!" Perceiving incongruity, says "Hullo! Beg yer pardon!" and tumbles out again. All this time the congregation have been breaking up into sects—as the manner of congregations often is—each sect sliding away by itself, and all pounding the weakest sect which slid first into the corner. Utmost point of dissent soon attained in every corner, and violent rolling. Stewards at length make a dash; conduct minister to the mast in the centre of the saloon, which he embraces with both arms; skate out; and leave him in that condition to arrange affairs with flock.

There was another Sunday, when an officer of the ship read the Service. It was quiet and impressive, until we fell upon the dangerous and perfectly unnecessary experiment of striking up a hymn. After it was given out, we all rose, but everybody left it to somebody else to begin. Silence resulting, the officer (no singer himself) rather reproachfully gave us the first line again, upon which a rosy pippin of an old gentleman, remarkable throughout the passage for his cheerful politeness, gave a little stamp with his boot (as if he were leading off a country dance), and blithely warbled us into a show of joining. At the end of the first verse we became, through these tactics, so much refreshed and encouraged, that none of us, howsoever unmelodious, would submit to be left out of the second verse; while as to the third we lifted up our voices in a sacred howl that left it doubtful whether we were the more boastful of the sentiments we united in professing, or of professing them with a most discordant defiance of time, and tune.

"Lord bless us," thought I, when the fresh remembrance of these things made me laugh heartily, alone in the dead water-gurgling waste of the night, what time I was wedged into my berth by a wooden bar, or I must have rolled out of it, "what errand was I then upon, and to what Abyssinian point had public events then marched? No matter as to me. And as to them, if the wonderful popular rage for a plaything (utterly confounding in its inscrutable unreason) had not then lighted on a poor young savage boy, and a poor old screw of a horse, and hauled the first off by the hair of his princely head to 'inspect' British volunteers, and hauled the second off by the hair of his equine tail to the Crystal Palace, why so much the better for all of us outside Bedlam!"

So, sticking to the ship, I was at the trouble of asking myself would I like to show the grog distribution in "the fiddle" at noon, to the Grand United Amalgamated Total Abstinence Society. Yes, I think I should. I think it would do them good to smell the rum, under the circumstances. Over the grog, mixed in a bucket, presides the boatswain's mate, small tin can in hand. Enter the crew, the guilty consumers, the grown up Brood of Giant Despair, in contradistinction to the Band of youthful angel Hope. Some in boots, some in leggings, some in tarpaulin overalls, some in frocks, some in pea-coats, a very few in jackets, most with sou' wester hats,

all with something rough and rugged round the throat; all, dripping salt water where they stand; all pelted by weather, besmeared with grease, and blackened by the sooty rigging. Each man's knife in its sheath in his girdle, loosened for dinner. As the first man, with a knowingly kindled eye, watches the filling of the poisoned chalice (truly but a very small tin mug, to be prosaic), and tossing back his head, tosses the contents into himself, and passes the empty chalice and passes on, so the second man with an anticipatory wipe of his mouth on sleeve or neck-kerchief, bides his turn, and drinks and hands, and passes on. In whom, and in each as his turn approaches, beams a knowingly-kindled eye, a brighter temper and a suddenly awakened tendency to be jocose with some shipmate. Nor do I even observe that the man in charge of the ship's lamps, who in right of his office has a double allowance of poisoned chalices, seems thereby vastly degraded, even though he empties the chalices into himself, one after the other, much as if he were delivering their contents at some absorbent establishment in which he had no personal interest. But vastly comforted I note them all to be, on deck presently, even to the circulation of a redder blood in their cold blue knuckles; and when I look up at them lying out on the yards and holding on for life among the beating sails, I cannot for my life see the justice of visiting on them—or on me—the drunken crimes of any number of criminals arraigned at the heaviest of Assizes.

Abetting myself in my idle humour, I closed my eyes and recalled life on board of one of those mail packets, as I lay, part of that day, in the bay, of New York O! The regular life began—mine always did, for I never got to sleep afterwards—with the rigging of the pump while it was yet dark, and washing down of the decks. Any enormous giant at a prodigious hydropathic establishment, conscientiously undergoing the Water Cure in all its departments, and extremely particular about cleaning his teeth, would make those noises. Swash, splash, scrub, rub, toothbrush, bubble, swash, splash, bubble, toothbrush, splash, splash, bubble, rub. Then the day would break, and descending from my berth by a graceful ladder composed of half-opened drawers beneath it, I would reopen my outer deadlight and my inner sliding window (closed by a watchman during the Water Cure), and would look out at the long-rolling lead-coloured white-topped

waves, over which the dawn, on a cold winter morning, cast a level lonely glance, and through which the ship fought her melancholy way at a terrific rate. And now, lying down again, awaiting the season for broiled ham and tea, I would be compelled to listen to the voice of conscience—the Screw.

It might be, in some cases, no more than the voice of Stomach, but I called it in my fancy by the higher name. Because, it seemed to me that we were all of us, all day long, endeavouring to stifle the Voice. Because, it was under everybody's pillow, everybody's plate, everybody's camp-stool, everybody's book, everybody's occupation. Because, we pretended not to hear it, especially at meal times, evening whist, and morning conversation on deck; but it was always among us in an under monotone, not to be drowned in pea soup, not to be shuffled with cards, not to be diverted by books, not to be knitted into any pattern, not to be walked away from. It was smoked in the weediest cigar, and drunk in the strongest cocktail; it was conveyed on deck at noon with limp ladies, who lay there in their wrappers until the stars shone; it waited at table with the stewards; nobody could put it out with the lights. It was considered (as on shore) ill bred to acknowledge the Voice of Conscience. It was not polite to mention it. One squally day an amiable gentleman in love, gave much offence to a surrounding circle, including the object of his attachment, by saying of it, after it had goaded him over two easy chairs and a skylight:—"Screw!"

Sometimes it would appear subdued. In fleeting moments when bubbles of champagne pervaded the nose, or when there was "hot pot" in the bill of fare, or when an old dish we had had regularly every day, was described in that official document by a new name. Under such excitements, one would almost believe it hushed. The ceremony of washing plates on deck, performed after every meal by a circle as of ringers of crockery triple-bob majors for a prize, would keep it down. Hauling the reel, taking the sun at noon, posting the twenty-four hours' run, altering the ship's time by the meridian, casting the waste food overboard, and attracting the eager gulls that followed in our wake; these events would suppress it for a while. But the instant any break or pause took place in any such diversion, the Voice would be at it again, importuning us to the last extent. A newly married young pair, who walked

the deck affectionately some twenty miles per day, would, in the full flush of their exercise, suddenly become stricken by it, and stand trembling, but otherwise immovable, under its reproaches.

When this terrible monitor was most severe with us, was when the time approached for our retiring to our dens for the night. When the lighted candles in the saloon grew fewer and fewer. When the deserted glasses with spoons in them, grew more and more numerous. When waifs of toasted cheese, and strays of sardines fried in batter, slid languidly to and fro in the table-racks. When the man who always read, had shut up his book and blown out his candle. When the man who always talked, had ceased from troubling. When the man who was always medically reported as going to have delirium tremens, had put it off till to-morrow. When the man who every night devoted himself to a midnight smoke on deck, two hours in length, and who every night was in bed within ten minutes afterwards, was buttoning himself up in his third coat for his hardy vigil. For then, as we fell off one by one, and, entering our several hatches, came into a peculiar atmosphere of bilge water and Windsor soap, the Voice would shake us to the centre. Woe to us when we sat down on our sofa, watching the swinging candle for ever trying and retrying to stand upon his head, or our coat upon its peg imitating us as we appeared in our gymnastic days, by sustaining itself horizontally from the wall, in emulation of the lighter and more facile towels. Then would the Voice especially claim us for its prey and rend us all to pieces.

Lights out, we in our berths, and the wind rising, the Voice grows angrier and deeper. Under the mattress and under the pillow, under the sofa and under the washing stand, under the ship and under the sea, seeming to arise from the foundations under the earth with every scoop of the great Atlantic (and O why scoop so!), always the Voice. Vain to deny its existence, in the night season; impossible to be hard of hearing; Screw, Screw, Screw. Sometimes it lifts out of the water, and revolves with a whirr, like a ferocious firework—except that it never expends itself, but is always ready to go off again; sometimes it seems to be aguish and shivers; sometimes it seems to be terrified by its last plunge, and has a fit which causes it to struggle, quiver, and for an instant stop. And now the ship sets in rolling, as only ships so

fiercely screwed through time and space, day and night, fair weather and foul, *can* roll. Did she ever take a roll before, like that last? Did she ever take a roll before, like this worse one that is coming now? Here is the partition at my ear, down in the deep on the lee side. Are we ever coming up again together? I think not; the partition and I are so long about it that I really do believe we have overdone it this time. Heavens, what a scoop! What a deep scoop, what a hollow scoop, what a long scoop! Will it ever end, and can we bear the heavy mass of water we have taken on board, and which has let loose all the table furniture in the officers' mess, and has beaten open the door of the little passage between the purser and me, and is swashing about, even there, and even here? The purser snores reassuringly, and the ship's bells striking, I hear the cheerful "All's well!" of the watch musically given back the length of the deck as the lately diving partition, now high in air, tries (unsoftened by what we have gone through together) to force me out of bed and berth.

"All's well!" Comforting to know, though surely all might be better. Put aside the rolling, and the rush of water, and think of darting through such darkness with such velocity. Think of any other similar object coming in the opposite direction! Whether there may be an attraction in two such moving bodies out at sea, which may help accident to bring them into collision? Thoughts too arise (the Voice never silent all the while, but marvellously suggestive) of the gulf below; of the strange unfruitful mountain ranges and deep valleys over which we are passing; of monstrous fish, midway; of the ship's suddenly altering her course on her own account, and with a wild plunge settling down, and making *that* voyage, with a crew of dead discoverers. Now, too, one recalls an almost universal tendency on the part of passengers to stumble, at some time or other in the day, on the topic of a certain large steamer making this same run, which was lost at sea and never heard of more. Everybody has seemed under a spell, compelling approach to the threshold of the grim subject, stoppage, discomfiture, and pretence of never having been near it. The boatswain's whistle sounds! A change in the wind, hoarse orders issuing, and the watch very busy. Sails come crashing home overhead, ropes (that seem all knot) ditto; every man engaged appears to have twenty feet, with twenty times the average amount of stamping power in each. Gradually the

noise slackens, the hoarse cries die away, the boatswain's whistle softens into the soothing and contented notes, which rather reluctantly admit that the job is done for the time, and the Voice sets in again. Thus come unintelligible dreams of up hill and down hill, and swinging and swaying, until consciousness revives of atmospherical Windsor soap and bilge water, and the Voice announces that the giant has come for the Water Cure again.

Such were my fanciful reminiscences as I lay, part of that day, in the Bay, of New York O! Also, as we passed clear of the Narrows and got out to sea; also, in many an idle hour at sea in sunny weather. At length the observations and computations showed that we should make the coast of Ireland to-night. So I stood watch on deck all night to-night, to see how we made the coast of Ireland.

Very dark, and the sea most brilliantly phosphorescent. Great way on the ship, and double look-out kept. Vigilant captain on the bridge, vigilant first officer looking over the port side, vigilant second officer standing by the quarter-master at the compass, vigilant third officer posted at the stern-rail with a lantern. No passengers on the quiet decks, but expectation everywhere nevertheless. The two men at the wheel, very steady, very serious, and very prompt to answer orders. An order issued sharply now and then, and echoed back; otherwise the night drags slowly, silently, and with no change. All of a sudden, at the blank hour of two in the morning, a vague movement of relief from a long strain expresses itself in all hands; the third officer's lantern twinkles, and he fires a rocket, and another rocket. A sullen solitary light is pointed out to me in the black sky yonder. A change is expected in the Light, but none takes place. "Give them two more rockets, Mr. Vigilant." Two more, and a blue light burnt. All eyes watch the light again. At last a little toy sky-rocket is flashed up from it, and even as that small streak in the darkness dies away, we are telegraphed to Queenstown, Liverpool, and London, and back again under the Ocean to America.

Then, up come the half-dozen passengers who are going ashore at Queenstown, and up comes the Mail-Agent in charge of the bags, and up come the men who are to carry the bags into the Mail Tender that will come off for them out of the harbour. Lamps and lanterns gleam here and there about the decks, and impeding bulks are knocked away with handspikes, and the



port-side bulwark, barren but a moment ago, bursts into a crop of heads of seamen, stewards, and engineers. The light begins to be gained upon, begins to be alongside, begins to be left astern. More rockets, and, between us and the land, steams beautifully the Inman steam-ship, *City of Paris*, for New York, outward bound. We observe with complacency that the wind is dead against her (it being *with* us), and that she rolls and pitches. (The sickest passenger on board is the most delighted by this circumstance.) Time rushes by, as we rush on, and now we see the light in Queenstown Harbour, and now the lights of the Mail Tender coming out to us. What vagaries the Mail Tender performs on the way, in every point of the compass, especially in those where she has no business, and why she performs them, Heaven only knows! At length she is seen plunging within a cable's length of our port broadside, and is being roared at through our speaking trumpets to do this thing, and not to do that, and to stand by the other, as if she were a very demented Tender indeed. Then, we slackening amidst a deafening roar of steam, this much-abused Tender is made fast to us by hawsers, and the men in readiness carry the bags aboard, and return for more, bending under their burdens, and looking just like the paste-board figures of the Miller and his Men in the Theatre of our boyhood, and comporting themselves almost as unsteadily. All the while, the unfortunate Tender plunges high and low, and is roared at. Then the Queens-town passengers are put on board of her, with infinite plunging and roaring, and the Tender gets heaved up on the sea to that surprising extent, that she looks within an ace of washing aboard of us, high and dry. Roared at with contumely to the last, this wretched Tender is at length let go, with a final plunge of great ignominy, and falls spinning into our wake.

The Voice of conscience resumed its dominion, as the day climbed up the sky, and kept by all of us passengers into port. Kept by us as we passed other lighthouses, and dangerous islands off the coast, where some of the officers, with whom I stood my watch, had gone ashore in sailing ships in fogs (and of which by that token they seemed to have quite an affectionate remembrance), and past the Welsh coast, and past the Cheshire coast, and past everything and everywhere lying between our ship and her own special dock in the Mersey. Off which, at last, at nine of the

clock, on a fair evening early in May, we stopped, and the Voice ceased. A very curious sensation, not unlike having my own ears stopped, ensued upon that silence, and it was with a no less curious sensation that I went over the side of the good Cunard ship *Russia* (whom *Prosperity* attend through all her voyages!), and surveyed the outer hull of the gracious monster that the Voice had inhabited. So, perhaps, shall we all, in the spirit, one day survey the frame that held the busier Voice, from which my vagrant fancy derived this similitude.

#### THE PIGEONS OF VENICE.

Of all the sights of Venice none are more remarkable in their way than the sunsets and the pigeons. Stand on the Molo of a winter's afternoon, with the Doge's Palace on your left hand, and the church of the Salute (*Our Lady of Health*) on your right, and you will see the Windows of the West thrown open; you will see sunsets that suggest the Judgment Day and the destruction of the world by fire. Wait until the bells ring and the watcher on the tower has mumbled his Ave Maria, and you will see a cloud of pigeons flying from all parts of the city towards the setting sun. It is the tocsin of the Virgin Mary; "twenty-four o'clock," as the Romans say. In a little while, it will be dark, and these pigeons (sacred birds of Venice) will have sought their nests among the domes and spires of the cathedral.

How it came to be a point of pride with the Venetians to defend these birds and to leave legacies to them, and afterwards, in a bewildered sort of way, to seek saintships for them in the local calendar, are matters involved in mystery. But thus much is known respecting them.

The pigeons of Venice are the protégés of the city, as the Lions of St. Mark are its protectors. They are fed every day at two o'clock. A dinner bell is rung for them; and they are not allowed to be interfered with. Any person found ill-treating a pigeon is arrested. If it be his first offence, he is fined; if he be an old offender, he is sent to prison. In the good old days of the Republic, the guilt of shedding a pigeon's blood could only be expiated by the law of Moses taking full effect upon the culprit in the spirit of "an eye for an eye, and a tooth for a tooth," much as the same law was brought to bear on poachers, sheepstealers, and others in our own country, eighty years ago.

It is believed by the credulous that the pigeons of Venice are in some way connected with the prosperity of the city; that they fly round it three times every day in honour of the Trinity; and that their being domiciled in the town is a sign that it will not be swallowed up by the waves. When it is high water, they perch on the top of the tower. When the

Venetians are at war, or when there is any prospect of a change of dynasty, they gather round the Lion of St. Mark, over the entrance to the cathedral, and consult in a low voice about the destinies of the city. Doubt these facts if you like, but not in Venice. What spiders were to Robert Bruce, what crocodiles are to certain wild tribes in Africa, the columbines or little pigeons are to the Venetians.

Some writers assert that the birds came to Venice at the time of the crusades, one of their number having settled on the helmet of a troubadour or "fighting bard," whose songs had lured it out of Palestine. Other accounts say that they were originally heard of, in connexion with a festival or religious procession which took place soon after the foundation of the cathedral in 1071. But the real story is this.

On a certain Palm Sunday, in the Middle Ages, the priests of St. Mark determined to give the people a treat. They collected a number of pigeons, tied small weights to their wings, and set them flying over the Piazza, with a view to their falling into the hands of "needy and deserving persons." Stones, sticks, and knives, were thrown at the birds, and many birds were killed; but some escaped and concealed themselves in the crevices of the cathedral. One took refuge under the gown of the Virgin Mary (a statue so called), and another got entangled in the hands of a clock and bled to death. The sacredness of the place screened the survivors from further harm, and all thoughts of pursuing them were abandoned. They became the pets of the city, and after a few years were taken under the protection of the Doge. By that time they had multiplied to such an extent as to have become almost as numerous as the sparrows are in London; and so great were the love and veneration which they excited in the breasts of the populace, that no man's life was considered safe who insulted a pigeon. Special laws were made for them, called Pigeon Laws, and Venice ran the risk at one time of being permanently called Columbia, or the City of Doves. Finally, a pension was settled upon them, and a daily dinner-bell was rung for their accommodation.

A curious part of this affair is, that the birds never forget their dinner hour—never allow their excursions on the Lagunes to interfere with it. Sometimes the bell rings too soon, sometimes too late; but the birds are always there at the right time; and if the bell-ringing be omitted—as it sometimes has been by way of experiment—they scream and flap their wings in a peculiar manner. This may seem incredible, but the story has been verified over and over again, both for the amusement of visitors and the satisfaction of the authorities.

It is a pretty sight of a summer's day to watch these birds flying about the Piazza to the sound of the bells, and finally alighting under the window of the terrace where their dinner is thrown out to them in a golden shower of grain. Once upon a time it was a young lady who performed this office; now it is a young man. The change is for the worse.

The pigeons of Venice are black and white (or grey) with pink eyes and red feet. A beautiful green collaret surrounds the throat; the body is quite white under the wings. Some of them have white tails, whiter than the snow which falls on the summit of the Appenines; and opal or topaz eyes, which change their tints a thousand times a day. It is of birds like these that mention is made in Eastern stories, birds that did duty as postmen, and carried letters to and fro between ladies and gentlemen. Some say the pigeons of St. Mark are of so rare a breed that none like them are to be obtained for love or money out of the sea-city; but the vouchers are Venetians.

Their principal foes are the cats, the enemies of the feathered race in all parts of the world. Various depredations have been made on the cathedral by these amateurs of game, causing it to be feared, at one time, that a one-sided war of extermination would take place. But these fears have not been realised. The birds are on their guard against their enemies, and housewives who are troubled with mice use traps for their destruction in lieu of cats. Thus, the cats are often reduced to the last stage of misery and degradation. More like tigers than domestic animals, they will fly at their foes on the slightest provocation. But cats are so shamefully treated all over Italy, that there is some excuse for their ferocity. In obscure places they are looked upon as emissaries of the Devil, and are burnt for witches.

Pigeon pie is not a favourite dish with the Venetians. It is considered "shabby genteel" food. Children accustomed to play with the birds in the Piazza will not touch it, and beggars have been known to prefer a crust of dry bread to pigeon's flesh. It may naturally be asked how pigeons come to be eaten at all in a place where they are the object of so much romantic attachment, and why poulterers expose them in their shop windows. Ask this question of an hotel-keeper, and he will tell you that the pigeons sold for food are not the pigeons of St. Mark, but have been imported into Venice from the mainland at great trouble and expense. He will tell you, if he be a Venetian, that he would rather die than cook a city pigeon.

The long and the short of the matter is, that the pigeons of St. Mark are a remnant of the ancient glories of the city: a living record of the days when Venice was the mistress of the seas, the centre of civilisation, the market-place and tribune of one-half of the civilised world. To a Venetian these birds are messengers of peace—tokens of pride and power which will one day reassert themselves.

Some of the pigeons took part in the revolution of 1849 (flying between the Austrians and the Italians) and were shot by mistake; others were cooked for food, or eaten raw. But it is the boast of the Venetians that Venice was true to the pigeons even in her hour of famine; that their dinner-bell was rung regularly; and that their dinner was supplied to them without stint, when hundreds of families were in want

of the commonest necessities of life, and were visited at the same time by fire, famine, and pestilence. Daniel Manin did his work well. He defended the city against the Austrians, but he did not forget the city birds. They were in a measure bequeathed to him by the Doges, his predecessors, and the people ate porridge while the pigeons (in prime condition to be killed) were flying about the streets. Honour to Daniel Manin! His body lies in the cathedral, but the pigeons of St. Mark have made a dove-cot of his prison bars, and prefer it (or seem to prefer it) to the Bridge of Sighs. So say the people of Venice. And a wild song, sung by the boatmen of the Molo, declares that the spirit of Daniel Manin is flying about the Lagunes to this day, in the shape of a beautiful white dove.

### FATAL ZERO.

A DIARY KEPT AT HOMBURG.

#### CHAPTER I.

DATCHLEY, Monday, August the First.—Another day of agony and of acting. Soon all must be stopped. It cannot go on. Here is my last day of absence from the bank, and I am not one bit better. They have been only too indulgent. But what can they do? They must have their work done, and already they are complaining up in the London office. A hundred and fifty pounds a year, and that darling of mine, Dora—the children—all depending on me. If I lost this situation, what would become of us? And yet I must. My fingers can scarcely feel the pen, and the trembling characters swim before my eyes as I write on; the paper seems to rise up like waves of a huge white sea and suffuse my pupils. What am I to do? There, my darling has just gone out with the usual question, "How do you feel now, dear? You are stronger after this rest, are you not?" And I falsely say "Yes!" How can I pain her, she suffers more than I do. O, what folly and infatuation to have brought her into this state of life! I should have stood by and let her marry that man, who would have, at least, maintained her in comfort; but my own selfishness would not let me. He might have turned out a good husband. Though he was not a good man, she must have made him one. But my selfishness must sacrifice her to myself. Like us all! There! I open a book—a favourite one of mine—Holy Living and Dying, and read a sentence; up rises the page to my eyes like a great wave of foam; a faint buzzing begins in my ears and swells into the roar of a great sea. What does all this

mean? What can be coming? God preserve my senses! or can this be a punishment that I have deserved? Yet the doctor proceeds with his cant, "A little rest is all that is wanted—you must give up work." How smoothly they say these things—so complacently. And pray will you, sir, feed her, feed them, pay the rent? No! so far from that, his eye is wandering to her gentle delicate little fingers, which, by that divine Aladdin's Lamp a dear devoted girl contrives to find, have got hold of what will satisfy him. We men can find for ourselves readily enough, but they find for others. There—there I must stop.

That cruel fellow, Maxwell, the manager, has been twice here in these three days. A cold, hard, cruel man. He said, he supposes I am suffering, as I say so, but really he cannot see what is wrong with me. With difficulty restraining myself, I ask him, Did he suppose I was counterfeiting, or that the doctor was counterfeiting? He answers in his insolent way, that what he supposed privately did not bear on the matter; the question was how the bank was to get its work done. I must see that they could not go on paying high salaries to invalids. He had his duty to the board and shareholders. I was either very sick, or only a little sick. If the former I had better resign, if the latter I had better return to my work. He really could give me no longer than to-morrow at furthest.

Poor Dora shrinks from this cruel sentence as if she were standing in the dock with a child in her arms.

"Oh, Mr. Maxwell," she cries, "you will not be so cruel!" He gave her a savage look.

"That is the word they have for me through the town. Mr. Maxwell, the hard man—a griping, cruel man. I do my duty, my good Mrs. Austen, and let every one else whether they are ladies and gentlemen or no, do theirs."

That was our crime. He never forgave that. He had once swept the bank offices, so the story went. He had no religion but money and figures. He had never been seen once in a place of worship, and one of the clerks saw a cheap translation of the infidel Renan on his table. Yet whatever he does to us I can pray for him to an indulgent Lord, and I shall get Dora to do the same. There again, I must stop. This agitation makes me forget for a few seconds that I can't write.

Tuesday, 2nd.—At last it has all broken down. I dare not go to the office. Quite helpless. She sees it, and knows the miserable night I have passed. I have sent to Maxwell, to the bank. He has cruelly warned me that on the day after tomorrow they will call upon me to resign. Then what will be done! . . . only one thing—Heaven's will.

Three o'clock. Mr. Stanhope, the clergyman, just gone. Lord Langton has fallen from his horse, and they have got down Sir Duncan Dennison, the great London doctor—a good man and a charitable man—and Mr. Stanhope has brought him on to me. But his remedy! I could have laughed, but for her sad face. "My good friend, no tricks will do here. You are in a bad way this moment; and I tell you solemnly your only chance is the German waters, and, listen, one special one of those German places—Homburg—is the only thing to save you. I snatched a man from the jaws, from the throat of death, this year, by packing him off. You must go to-morrow morning." A fine remedy, and a precious one truly. Maxwell comes in as the doctor is there, and Dora passionately tells him what has been said. He listens coolly and civilly.

"With that I have nothing to say. We have to begin making out the report to-night, and are not going to take on fresh hands to swell the expenses. The best thing you can do—and I advise you as manager—is to resign at once. I have another man ready for the place, and I dare say it could be arranged that a quarter's salary could be got in some way, as a bonus, with which you could take your expedition."

"And leave them to starve! What do you suppose is to become of us? Are they to be turned out on the road? Has your bank, your board of blood-suckers, no heart, no soul?"

"The Associated Bank!—God bless me, yes!" said Sir Duncan, who had been silent. "I attend at least two of the directors, as honest and soft fellows as ever signed a cheque. They're not the fellows to suck anybody's blood—unless at least, it's in private."

"They are men of business, sir," said Maxwell, "and do their duty to the bank and the shareholders."

Then they all left us, Sir Duncan saying: "My poor fellow, I am sorry for you! Something may turn up."

We, however, were calm. As I said

before, I had taught Dora whom to turn to in these straits, and bade her pray for even Maxwell. On myself I find a sort of insensibility coming, I suppose from illness. And yet I have great vitality and life, and if there was a crisis or purpose before me, could shake all off for a time.

Four o'clock!—What ungrateful creatures we are! Oh, to an ever bountiful Providence be all praise! It seems like a miracle; but that confidence, somehow, never failed. A telegram lies before me from the directors in London. A note from Maxwell, at the same time. He would not come himself, though he came so often before, to gloat over our miseries. But I shall find out more of his treachery. Still I am so joyous, so supremely happy, I can be angry with no one. Mr. Barnard, who is a director, but who has been away on the Continent, has come down himself. He has seen and told me the plan—leave of absence, and *I am not to resign!* Oh, happy change! I feel as in a dream!

Five o'clock.—There is more happiness to set down. I can hardly write these words—not from sickness, but from excitement. It is all settled, and I go, not this morning, but to-night—this very night. Heaven is very good—too good! Not an hour ago Mr. Barnard came in here—his knock made me tremble.

"So you are ill?" he said, it seemed with sternness. "Well, this can't go on. You will lose your situation; the bank must have its work done."

"I know it, sir," I said.

"And so this Sir Duncan says nothing short of Homburg will do you. A first-class watering-place, and an expensive journey for a bank clerk! Well, well!"

Dora was in a flood of tears. "Oh, he will die, sir!" she said, passionately.

"No he won't," he said, with a sudden change in manner—"or, at least, if he does, it shall be his own fault. Come, he shall go, and this night too."

My dear gave a scream. I felt the colour in my own face. He sat down and gave us details of this miraculous deliverance.

Here was the plan, and I do recognise in it one more proof of that actual guidance of Providence—that positive interference in our affairs here below. Oh, how unworthy, I say again, am I of such goodness! Our bank, it seems, in London, has a good many Jew directors, and has been trying to get a little foreign business in the way of agency. A rich Frankfurt merchant, whom he knew,



was anxious to buy an estate in England, for which Barnard was trustee. It was a small one, but he fancied the situation and the house. The writings were prepared; and a solicitor was going out to have them executed, and to receive the money and make other arrangements, when Mr. Barnard conceived this idea of substituting me for the solicitor.

"You shall have your expenses there and back, and handsome ones, too, out of which you can squeeze a fortnight's keep. But you must be back within the month; no shirking, mind, for I am your warranty, and get well, too; make use of every hour; for if you lose this chance, we can't promise you another."

He has gone. A case with the papers and a letter of instruction has just come up. A clerk who brought them counted down fifty golden sovereigns. It is a dream. Dora danced round and kissed one of them. If she were only coming, my love and guardian angel; but we cannot compass that! It will be only for one month, and I shall come back to her happy and strong, and able to work for our children. Is it a dream? It is like a wish in a Fairy Tale. The express leaves to-night at eight. I shall sleep in London and go on to-morrow.

Wednesday, London, Charing Cross Hotel.—Bore the journey wonderfully, getting better absolutely. This is all hope dancing before my eyes. No ledger this morning—my heart is bounding within me. So curious this great desolate chamber, where a hundred people are taking breakfast. Could hear the screaming of the engine close by. My train, yes, in ten minutes. Delightful all this excitement. It is new life—a bright sunny day—the bustling crowds going by—the gay look of everything, and the pleasant journey all before me.

#### CHAPTER II.

BRUSSELS, SIX P.M.—Such a day. Delicious sea—happy travellers—charming green fields, and that strange look of Ostend, the first foreign place I have ever seen. All red tiles and potsherds, it seemed to me, at a distance. The white quays and yellow houses. Then the trains through the pleasant Belgian country; the odd faces, and that singular custom of the guard coming in so mysteriously at the door, when the train is at full speed. What things I shall have to tell and amuse darling Dora, whose name makes my heart low, only this

excitement prevents me thinking of anything dismal. I shall write a book of travels, make a little money, and give it all to her. But this amazing and delicious capital! It is awe-striking—so solid and splendid—and the glorious cathedral! Such wealth, such gorgeousness to be in the world, which we do not dream of even. The trees in the streets, the people sitting out and taking coffee, the splendid carriages, and all with such a grand and noble air of stateliness. I have noted a thousand things to tell Dora when I return. I feel getting stronger every moment, and a quarter of an hour ago read an English paper, without finding the words swimming, and the paper rising up to my eyes. I think I shall go on to-night.

Friday, Cologne.—A long night in the great roomy carriages, and very comfortable. A little curtain to draw over the lamp, and the whole left to myself: so I might have been in my own room, yet did not get to sleep till nearly one o'clock; not so much from noise or novelty, as from my own thoughts, so much was coming back on me. This was the first time I had been away from home, from Dora; and now that I was at a distance, she, and all that she had passed, began to rise before me like pictures. I could see now—like a man walking back to get a good view of a picture—her sweet face in the centre, and what a deal I had gone through to win it for myself! Though she never shall know it, much of what I suffer now is owing to that six years' feverish anxiety. And I saved her from him. For a time I did feel some remorse, yet now I do not. It was all for a good end.

Let me think now, as an entertainment, of the first bright day on which I saw her. Some wealthy people, who lived in tolerable state, had "filled their house," as it is called, and had asked me down. I was reluctant to go. In these days—and not unpleasant days were they—how I lived in the book world, and very pleasant friends I had among them. For as Richard of Bury says, in words that sound like old church bells, "These are the masters that instruct us without rods; if you chide them they do not answer, if you neglect or ill-treat them they bear no malice. They are always cheerful, sweet-tempered, ready to talk and comfort us at any hour of night or day." For them I felt an affection—they seemed to me beautiful, with charming faces, and shall I own it?—some of the prettiest faces of nature when shown to me, appeared to

me, much as these pretty faces would look on mere money treasures. Do I not remember how I used to look out at the world, as from a window, and punctually as the clock struck twelve every night, would put away work, fetch out the best novel of the day, light the soothing cigar, and read for two hours? How enjoyable was this time, almost too exquisite! But the whole was about to collapse like a card house.

How curious this dark country looks "roaring by" the window with the glare and flash from a station. The dull "burr" of the train, and the lights from the windows dappling the ground. As I look out I see the small dark figure of the guard creeping along outside. In this situation, in my lonely blue chamber, there is a sort of vacuity for thought, the world is shut out and the pictures of the past pour in . . . .

Was it not a very stately place—a new castle, grand stabling, horses and carriages in profusion, as I was shown into the great drawing-room, and received with welcome by the hostess. The guests were all out, shooting, riding, walking, and—so unfortunate she says—lunch was over. The young ladies were in the garden, where we would go and look for them. Stay; no, here they were coming, and past the mullioned windows, which ran down to the ground, flitted two or three figures, led by a little scarlet cloak. In a second cheerful voices rang out like music; the door opened, and she came tripping in. I did not see the others. I do not know who they were to this moment; but was it not *then*, my dear foolish Austen, that everything fell in like a house of cards—that the glory passed away from the books and never returned?

Her name was Dora—a pretty and melodious one; she was small, elegantly made, and with dancing eyes, bright sloe black hair, and a look of refinement about her small features I have never seen in any one else. She was full of spirits, and laughter, and delight. I recollect to this moment how I was introduced, with what a coquettish solemnity she went through the ceremony, and how, as I bowed, I felt something whisper to me, "This is an important moment for you, sir . . ."

She was daughter to a great House in the neighbourhood. From that hour she unconsciously entered into my life. She little thought how her airy figure was to hover about my study, and of how many

day dreams she was to be the centre. So do the years go by; yet that dull blue cloth before me seems to open and draw away, and show me that gay noonday and that "morning room" at — House as distinctly as if it were yesterday. In my pocket-book I have at this moment a picture of her, done, not by the fanciful touch of memory, but by, perhaps, the less enduring one of the camera. It is hard to see by this light. Yes, there she is, a cloud of white sweeping behind her, flowers in her hand, with a soft inquiring look, half serious, and that seems on the verge of breaking into a smile, and spoiling the operator's whole work. So I saw her then, so I see her now. What if I was never to see her again! But this is too lugubrious! . . .

There, the blast again—a flashing \*and flaring of lamps, a screaming of the whistles, and we rumble into a blaze of light, with buffets and offices lit up, and sleepy passengers waiting. One fellow in a white hat invades my blue chamber—a gross Belgian, with a theatrical portmanteau pushed in before him, and an air as if he were performing some feat of distinction. Away flutters the little figure, and from that moment the charm is broken, clouds of tobacco-smoke begin, wherein, I suppose—fitting back-ground—he sees pictures of his own gross déjeuner à la fourchette, or dinner, at the Trois Frères. A true beast, that presently grunts and snores, lives but for the present hour, and never lifts up his soul in gratitude or humility. There, he has got out, and we have done with him. I know now the secret of this dislike; he reminded me so of Grainger, the only evil genius I ever encountered in my life, and the evil genius that I vanquished. Rather, grace and strength came to me from above, to aid me to vanquish him.

I see the very street in the little town on that gay morning. How well I remember our all rushing to the window of the bank the day the regiment came in—when we heard their music, and I must have seen him—Grainger—walk by, his sword drawn, at the head of his company, and looked at him, perhaps with admiration. I little dreamed what he was to be towards me, later. I thought of their coming with pleasure; it would vary the monotony. I thought of how they would amuse her, perhaps, for whom a country town must be dull indeed. Later, I see soldiers walking about the place, the officers rather fine and

contemptuous, for which one could bear them no ill-will, as they had fought and bled for us, and might take little airs.

(A cold blast and rush of air, as the conductor has come in like a spirit, with a lantern, and wants to see tickets.)

Let me look back again, setting my head, now aching a good deal, against these comfortable cushions. It is not likely that I shall sleep under these strange conditions. I like dwelling on little pictures of that time, and it is an easy and pleasant amusement constructing them. I next see one of our country-town little parties, and he making his way—no, not making, he disdained that trouble, he took it. His way he chose fitfully; he selected anything at hazard, called it his way, and others cheerfully bowed and adopted it. There are a few such men in the world, and I have often envied them. Such a manner is worth money and place and estate. See how long one of us takes to carry out a little play, to get to know people, even. We hesitate, make timorous advances, lose days and weeks. He does all in a few minutes. Time, in this short life, is money, and more valuable.

I dare say all this time he heartily disliked me—I am sure he did—and had that instinctive dislike which one man often has to another from the very outset. His eyes seemed to challenge me, and he knew me for an adversary. How could I compete with him, with such advantages on his side? And he had a great one, for in those days, my dear Dora, you were a little, ever so little, of a coquette, and liked to have your amusement, which was very natural indeed.

I have had my trials. My father had speculated and lost a fine estate, which he had also encumbered. We had all then to work and do what we could. I was a gentleman, and, though not a rich one, quite as good as they. But they looked down on me, because we had lost our fortune. Dora's father had bitterly resented what she had done, and all her fortune and estate, too, was left away to a cousin—a drinking, hunting fellow—who was amazed at his good fortune. I never regretted it a moment.

Grainger cast his eyes on her just to fill up his idle time. For me he affected contempt, but from me he was to have a lesson. They wished to force her to marry him, and she was helpless in their hands. But when I heard that scandal about the innkeeper's daughter, where, too, he was

lodging, was I not right to hunt it up? Could I have stood by and looked on? And though they said, and he protested, it was false, what of that? Did I not know him to be a man of a certain life? There were other cases as bad. He was not fit to be her husband, and if he did "go to the bad," later, it concerned himself, and merely proved my discernment. Thank God I saved her! and I can now lay my hand on my heart and feel no compunction whatever. . . . O that happy first year! She changed the whole colour of my life, made me thoughtful, steady, and taught me even to pray, which I did little of before. Angel! She shall teach me much more yet.

Saturday.—Homburg at last. Delightful and most easy journey. I have written my letter to her from this sweet and pastoral place. I write in the daintiest of little rooms, the yellow jealousies drawn close to keep out the sun. Outside the window is a balcony, Venetian-like in its breadth, filled up with a whole garden of flowers, where there is a table, and where one can walk about. It recalls an old and lost place in the country, before we were ruined, as they say. Overhead is an awning, and when the sun is less strong, I can go out, and walk up and down, and look into the street. If only Dora were here! No matter; one of these days she shall be, and better times will come; "one colour cannot always be turning up," as the maid said this morning. And here comes the post—a fellow like a soldier, with a very grim moustache, who hands in a letter. It is from her, I could guess at her writing from the very balcony. I run down to take it from the landlady's hands and tear it open. It seems a whole year since I have seen her. Dear characters! sweet writing! I fasten it in here, at this page of my little diary.

"DEAREST,—Oh, how I miss and long for you. How I long to learn that you have borne the journey well; not that you are better already, for that I am not so unreasonable as to expect. But soon you will tell me so. Our two little darlings only know that you have gone away. They think it is to the nearest town, and that you will be back to-morrow. Don't fatigue yourself writing, think only of your dear health. Keep out of the dreadful sun, and amuse yourself. I hope this will find you on your arrival.

"DORA."

The underlined words, how delicate, how

like her sweet soul! She has a faint notion, but she dares not let it appear, that I am a little better. I shall write this moment—what joyful news for her! . . . There, I have told her all, everything. Four closely written pages, a *little* swimming of the head, but I could almost work at the ledger this moment. I have told her how I was out betimes this morning, at six o'clock; how I walked up the bright street lined with fairy looking houses, all with their short broad balconies loaded with flowers, past the gay festive pavilions, more than hotels, the Four Seasons, the Victoria, with the cool shady courts and porches, past that turn to the right, down another sweet alley where are more fairy-like houses with balconies, and where the great ones live. The Kisseleff-street they call it, which gives a grand and inspiring Russian association. All this time in front of me, as I ascend, and seemingly far away, yet very close, are the rich, cool, heavily laden Taunus hills, covered with trees and verdure, rising slowly and grandly, and filling up the gap between the houses at the far end of the town. Then I walk on upwards, and see lovers of pleasure in white coats and straw Panama hats, sitting out in front of the hotels and smoking in the shade. Then I pass the great red building, the Kursaal, the Temple of Play, which looks like a king's palace. Then I turn down to the right, past the most inviting villas, all colours and shapes, now a Swiss chalet, now a true Italian house, but overgrown with the most exquisite foliage, the metal of their balconies all embroidered with leaves, behind which you see white dresses, and from behind which comes the clink of breakfast china. Other windows, windows lower down, are thrown wide open, and there the morning meal goes on, even in the gardens; fat men in white coats and no waistcoats, with four double chins at least, are enjoying pipe and coffee. Then the houses stop short, and the dense greenery begins, groves upon groves, forest mounting over forest, walks winding here and winding there. Along the path, honest Homburgers have their little table with an awning, under which is the cool melon, the grape, the delicious honey, and mountain butter, most inviting. If Dora were but on my arm how she would enjoy all this, as, indeed, I must stop in this description to tell her.

Well, I walk on through this greenery, through the most charming alleys, cut in the groves, and, through the trees, see afar the glitter of company, the sheen of curious figures flitting to and fro among the leaves, the glimpse of a Swiss chalet. Such crowds, it seems like a Watteau feast! Down through the avenues float the balmiest breezes, health restoring as I feel when they touch me. Then I emerge on the open space, and see the most animated scene, bright colours, bright dresses, white coats, grey coats, hats white and grey, fluttering veils, pink and cream coloured parasols, flowers, "costumes," of every pattern, actually like the opening scene of the chorus at an opera seen long, long ago. From a pagoda came strains of rich music with the clash of cymbals, and soft stroke of drum. How new, how delicious all this to me! In the centre was the well deep below, with spacious steps leading down, and girls giving out the water, and crowds pressing forward to receive it. The chinking of glass everywhere. Beyond, again, rows of little shops for jewellery and trifles, charming and most exhilarating scene, as I look on. The animation and gaiety drive away all the sinking and weakness, and I seem to grow strong and hopeful every moment. Down the steps do they troop, the loveliest of women, French, English, and American, as I know by the curious chatter of the voices, and with them lords, and friends, and admirers.

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